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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with President Putin of Russia (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
President Putin

Note takers: Leslie Radcliff, Jeff Houle,
Alex Joves

Interpreter: Peter Afanasenko

DATE, TIME November 7, 2002, 7:34 - 7:52 a.m. EST
AND PLACE: Oval Office

The President: Good morning, Vladimir, How are you? (U)

President Putin: Hello. Everything is alright, but I know that you are feeling better. (U)

The President: Yes, thank you. We had a nice election. (U)

President Putin: I would like to congratulate you on your success, the great success, which was the result of your talent, leadership, and courage, your very courageous position. (U)

The President: Thank you, Vladimir, I appreciate that very much. We had a good night, but now it's time to move on. (U)

President Putin: I'm absolutely sure that this is not the result of actions of your party, but is a result of your personal success, and I would like to congratulate you. (U)

The President: Thank you very much. I value your friendship and your congratulations mean a lot. Listen, I want to thank you for taking my call. I don't want to keep you long, but I have a couple of issues starting with Iraq. In the U.N., Vladimir, we worked very hard to work with you and the French, and everybody else to come up with common ground to achieve that objective you and I talked about, which is to obtain a peaceful resolution and to ensure Saddam does not have weapons of mass destruction. We are now at a point where we are literally discussing commas and periods. Here is where I think we are. First, that the inspection regime is realistic and tough, which is what you

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initially said it should be. Secondly, it is clear in the resolution that the territory of Iraq remains intact. Thirdly, that there is an agreement by me to come and consult at the U.N. should there be a material breach, although, my friend, I continue to reserve the right to handle the situation, but the idea of the United States discussing this issue is something we conceded. In other words, there is not any automaticity in the resolution. Finally, two quick other things, and that is Don Evans came into my office the other day. I had him in the Oval Office alone. I wanted to make sure that he continued to send the right message to Gref about the economics involved. I know your position, and we will work closely with you to accommodate that position if we can. And finally, we've had enough discussion in the U.N. and it's time to move, and I want your vote on this resolution. I think it is in your interest for you to say you've done all you can. The United States has worked together effectively with you, and now it's time to move forward in the interest of peace. (C)

President Putin: I would like to tell you that the job we've done, and the efforts we've undertaken, are really serious and responsible efforts, but before we talk about Iraq, I would like to express once again my deepest appreciation for your support during the tragic days in Moscow when the terrorist attack happened here. Regrettably, we failed to avoid human casualties, but the objective of eliminating terrorists was achieved. We are very happy that the State Department agreed to include Chechen groups in the list of terrorist organizations. You will agree, George, it has not been done until now, and it's precisely those people together with the Taliban and al-Qaida who have killed Americans and Russians all over the world. Now, let's move to Iraq. Really, we've done a really great and serious job. We really appreciate this partnership approach. I agree with you that now we really are talking about commas and periods, and now, there is a tangible possibility we can achieve agreement. I would like to tell you that our experts have certain concerns with paragraphs 7, 13, and others, but the major problem is still with paragraph 4. You are aware of our position. Our position is an honest and frank position, and we don't want automaticity in the resolution which would trigger military action. (C)

The President: Vladimir, you will find that there is no automaticity. (C)

President Putin: I would like to say that we have come close to an agreement, and I would like to tell you that we are not going to play around. We would like to end in an honorable manner. Yesterday, I talked with Chirac, the President of France, and I told him that we would not abstain. We would either vote for or against the resolution. But if we get all the commas in place,

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in the right place, then I can tell you Russia will not only support the resolution, but actively contribute to its implementation. (S)

The President: Thank you, Vladimir. (U)

President Putin: Then, we will have to talk about Saudi Arabia, and you are aware out of 19 people who attacked the United States, 16 were Saudi nationals. (S)

The President: Yes. (U)

President Putin: And money to the Chechen terrorists is also coming from Saudi Arabia. And you know just fifteen minutes before commencement of the terrorist attack in Moscow, the information about this attack was publicly announced in Qatar. I would like to tell you that I was really upset that I failed to meet you in Mexico, but I hope that we will meet in St. Petersburg in the near future. Finally, I would like to congratulate Laura on her birthday. I believe it was on the 4th of November. I wish you and your family all possible success, and I hope to shake your hand when we meet. (S)

The President: Thank you, Vladimir. I will see you in St. Petersburg, and we will talk about the Middle East and terrorism. Congratulations should go to Laura for the fact that she has put up with me for 25 years. Thirdly, the diplomats can foul up anything, but now it's time for the leaders to step forward. I heard your call on automaticity, that is one concession we made. I want to remind you that each of us can handle things the way we see fit. Finally, happy holidays in Russia, friend. (S)

President Putin: Okay, I agree with you, George. I will push my diplomatic bureaucrats to agreement, and I ask you to push your diplomatic bureaucrats to agree. (S)

The President: Okay. (U)

President Putin: On issues that are sensitive to Russia. (S)

The President: Yes. Perfect, friend. Thanks for taking my call, and I look forward to seeing you in St. Petersburg. (S)

President Putin: Thank you very much for your telephone call. I'm always happy to talk to you. When I do not talk to you, I feel I am missing something. So, I expect I will see you in St. Petersburg. It will be a location close to St. Petersburg, and I am sure you will love it. (S)

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The President: Bye-bye, Vladimir. (U)

President Putin: All the best. (U)

-- End of Conversation --

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